

BASICS

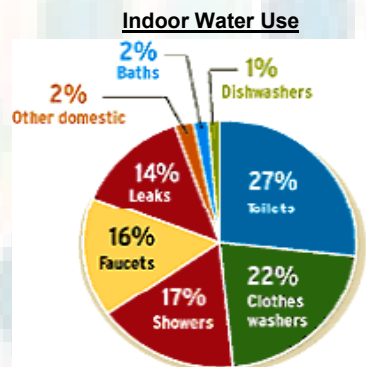
Increased pumping on stressed water aquifer systems could potentially lead to:

- Drinking water shortages
- Higher water costs
- Degraded water quality
- Environmental impacts such as dropping water levels in lakes, rivers, streams, and wetlands.

Through water conservation and pollution prevention programs, impacts to aquifers can be minimized.

Did you know that...?

- The average American uses 80-100 gallons of water per day, and the average family of four uses between 320-400 gallons of water per day.
- Landscape irrigation accounts for almost one-half of all residential water use in the summer.
- A single lawn sprinkler spraying five gallons per minute uses 50% more water in just one hour than a combination of ten toilet flushes, two 5-minute showers, two dishwasher loads, and a full load of laundry!
- Homeowners can reduce their indoor water use by about 30 percent by installing more efficient water fixtures and regularly checking for leaks.



For More Information:

- **McHenry County Division of Water Resources**
www.mchenryh2o.com
- **Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning**
<http://www.cmap.illinois.gov/watersupply/>
- **Alliance for Water Efficiency**
<http://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/>
- **US EPA—Water Sense Program**
<http://www.epa.gov/watersense/>
- **Soil-test Labs in Illinois**
<http://www.urbanext.uiuc.edu/soiltest/>

Additional information is
available at
www.mchenryh2o.com



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**County of McHenry
Division of Water Resources**



WATER CONSERVATION

WATER

The Significance of WATER

To many people, fresh water seems so abundant that we rarely notice it. We use it daily, and we expect it to always be there when we turn on the tap. Yet every day, we also waste water, we pollute it, and we let it run down the drain, flushing it away.

In reality, our potable fresh water supply is not unlimited! Less than three percent of all fresh water on earth is accessible and available for human use.

Water is life!. Without water, the world as we know it would not exist!

What is Groundwater? . . .

Groundwater is an essential and finite natural resource. In McHenry County, groundwater is our **only** potable water resource. Groundwater is stored in underground aquifers, which are primarily composed of sands and gravels. Groundwater feeds our rivers, streams, lakes and wetlands, and is used to provide all of our drinking water supplies in McHenry County.

Why Conserve? . . .

McHenry County residents currently enjoy the low-cost availability of high-quality water, which is pumped from our aquifers. However, with an expected population growth of 190,000 people between the years 2000 and 2030, some water planning professionals project that **some areas of our county may experience water shortages as early as 2030!**

SAVE WATER IN YOUR HOME . . .

Bathroom Tips

Replace your showerhead. Low-flow showerheads save an average of 2.5 gallons per minute.

Take a shower instead of a bath. The average bath takes 30-50 gallons of water. The average 4-8 minute shower with a low-flow showerhead uses 10-20 gallons of water.

Take shorter showers. Try a “Navy” shower: get wet, turn off the water, soap up, turn water on, rinse off. This uses an average of 4 gallons.

Don’t let it flow! Turn off the water while brushing your teeth, washing your face, or shaving. This can save an average of 3 gallons per day.

Check for toilet leaks. Remove cover of toilet tank, remove any “in-tank” bowl cleaners that color the water, and begin your test with clear water in the tank and bowl. Add food coloring to tank but do not flush. Wait 30 minutes. If color appears in the bowl, this shows that your toilet is leaking. Leaks can waste 200 gallons or more per day (6,000+ gallons per month).

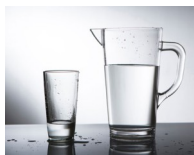


Don’t use your toilet as a trash can. This can save 400-600 gallons per month.

Purchase low flow toilets or install a water displacement device in toilet tank. You can do this with a plastic bottle of water weighted with pebbles. This can save an average of 5 gallons per day.

Kitchen Tips

Keep drinking water cold in the refrigerator. This way, every drop is used by you instead of running down the drain, which saves 200-300 gallons per month.



Use your garbage disposal sparingly. It takes roughly 2 gallons per minute to flush waste down a garbage disposal.



When washing dishes by hand, fill one sink or basin with soapy water and rinse dishes with a spray device or short blasts instead of letting the water run. Then use the dirty water to run the disposal if necessary. Saves 200-500 gallons/month.

Run only full loads in the dishwasher. Purchase dishwashers with energy saving options. The average dishwasher uses 6 gallons per cycle and the average Energy Star™ dishwasher uses 4 gallons. Saves 75-200 gallons per week.

Defrost food in the refrigerator or microwave. This saves 50-100 gallons per month.

Laundry Tips

Run only full loads in the washing machine or adjust the amount of water used according to the load size. Saves 75-200 gallons per week.

Purchase Energy Star™ or WaterSense® appliances. Energy Star™ washing machines use 18-25 gallons of water per load, compared to 40 gallons per load for the average machine.

Maintenance Tips

Fix leaking faucets and plumbing joints. One drop per second wastes 2,700 gallons of water in just one year! Additionally, dishwasher and clothes washer hoses should be replaced every 5 years.



Retrofit all household faucets by installing aerators with flow restrictors.

Insulate your water pipes. You’ll get hot water faster and avoid wasting water.

If you have a well at your home, check your pump. If the pump turns on and off while you are not using water, then you could have a leak.

. . . AND IN YOUR YARD!

Planting

Test your soil. Only apply fertilizer if a soil test tells you that your lawn needs it. This will help to protect groundwater and surface water quality.

Go native! Select plants that are native to your region, that can thrive with little or no extra watering or fertilizer. For example, native or non-invasive, drought-tolerant perennial plants can easily survive with less than an inch of water a week, once they are established.

Think small. Small, young plants require less water to establish.

Planting time. Plant in the spring or fall to take advantage of cooler temperatures, to minimize stress on plants and to reduce watering requirements.

Mulch like crazy. Add 2-3 inches of mulch around flowers, shrubs and trees to help the soil remain cool and moist. Mulch also discourages the growth of weeds, which steal water from your plants. Saves 750-1500 gal/month.

Lawn. Adjust your lawnmower height to leave 3 or more inches of grass in the summer. This encourages deeper roots and healthier grass. Saves an average of 500-1500 gallons per month.



Create windbreaks. Establishing shrubs or placing fencing around vegetable gardens can shelter plants from wind, which reduces evaporative moisture loss and prevents soils from drying out as quickly.

Watering

Install a Moisture Sensor. Moisture sensors turn off your irrigation system during rain, and monitor the soil to determine when and how much water your grass needs. If you don’t have a sensor, you can test soil moisture with your finger or irrigate when plants show signs of wilting.

Water deeply and infrequently. Promote deep root growth for a more drought- and disease-resistant lawn.

Keep it cool. Water your lawn or garden early in the morning, when the sun’s rays are not as hot. This helps to prevent evaporation and allow water to soak into your soil. Use sprinklers that emit large droplets, rather than a fine mist.

Soak, don’t spray. Install drip irrigation and soaker hoses in planting beds and beneath trees and shrubs. Use watering cans whenever possible.

Capture and recycle rainwater. Use a rain barrel to collect rainwater for irrigation of gardens, lawns, shrubs and trees.



Sidewalks don’t need water.

Adjust sprinklers to water only lawn and garden areas - not sidewalks, patios, or driveways. On slopes or on dry, compacted, soils, stop watering when runoff occurs. Allow moisture to soak into the soil before restarting. Saves an average of 500 gallons per month

During drought, lawns go dormant. With the exception of bluegrass, lawns will go dormant and then recover when rainfall returns! Prioritizing which plants really need water will save time, money and water.

Other Outdoor Water-Wasters

Cover your swimming pool. This keeps the pool cleaner, reduces the need to add chemicals, keeps the water warmer, and cuts down on evaporation. Saves an average of 1300 gallons per month.

Don’t let it run. Use a bucket of soapy water and a shutoff spray nozzle on your hose when washing your car. Saves 150 gallons each time.



Sweep driveways, patios and sidewalks instead of using a hose to clean them. Saves an average of 150 gallons each time.

Check for leaks in pipes, hoses, hose connections, and faucets. An irrigation system with pressure set at 60 pounds per square inch that has a leak (about the thickness of a dime) can waste about 6,300 gallons of water per month.